Career Building

Through Competency Architecture

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Predictors of Performance Excellence

Some people are effective than others. They approach goals differently than average people. There can be an unknown Mother Elisa who is also serving humanity but she may not be compared to Mother Theresa. How do we differentiate between Harilal Gandhi and Mahatma Gandhi who are a mole and mountain comparison? How different are successful people from others who are not?

Prediction of performance excellence is the key for organisations. In the first Generation Assessment, Talent was the only criteria. In the 2nd, Assessment was based on Selection and Career Orientation. In the 3rd GA in mid 80s Training and Development was added. In 90s, the 4 th GA, Assessment of Career orientation, Training and Development and Organisational change, was considered. This opened up new concepts such as 360 degree assessments, Development Centers, Learning Centers, Self Insight Centers, and Virtual Assessments.

In 1960, David McClelland, a Harvard Psychologist and founder of McBer, wrote a land mark article in the 'American Psychologist' asserting that I.Q and Personality Tests were poor predictors of success. Later he was asked by the U.S. Foreign Service to develop new methods that could predict human performance. The goal was to eliminate the potential biases of traditional intelligence and aptitude testing. This was the beginning of the era of competency movement.

What characteristics differentiate outstanding performance was the question before McClelland's research team. The team made contrast assessment of outstanding and average performers using ratings from their peers and bosses. They developed a system called Behavioural Event Interview to provide detailed accounts of how the interviewees approached critical situations both successful and unsuccessful ones. The later stage developed was Content Analysis to identify themes differentiating outstanding performers from average performers. All through the research team used non-leading probing questions. In the thematic analysis of interview data, the job analysis part focused outstanding performance which was related to Competencies. That was the first Competency Model

Employee competencies are actually the human capital and not the manpower strength. Competencies are fundamental building blocks of success results of an organisation's business.

Competency models work well as unifying frameworks for variety of people applications. More than 50% of fortune 500 companies have competency based practices which are built using Resource Panels, Critical Event Interviews, by applying Generic Competency Models or by combining all the three methods. Besides McClelland, the UK NQ movement in 1991 and AT&T sponsored studies opened up the Competency Era.

In the Competence at Work (1993), a first extraordinary work on competencies, there are three Basic Assumptions. 1. in every job, some people perform more effectively than others. These people also approach their jobs differently from the average worker. 2. These differences in approach relate directly to specific characteristics or competencies of the superior performers that are often less prominent in the average performers. 3. The best way to discover the characteristics that relate to effective performance in an organization (or common type of role) is to study superior performers.